

REMARKS:

In the outstanding Office Action, claims 1-15 were rejected. Claims 1, 2, 7, 9, 12, 13 and 15 have been amended for clarification. Claims 6 and 8 are cancelled without prejudice. New claim 16 has been added. Thus, claims 1-16 are pending and under consideration. No new matter has been added. The rejections are traversed below.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §102(e):

Claims 1-6 and 8-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0111864 ('864).

'864 discusses a coupon management system for transmitting or broadcasting a coupon information with a program or commercial message where a number of issued coupons are calculated for each program or commercial message.

The present invention is directed to an automatic transaction apparatus and method for issuing coupons including identifying a recording medium for outputting the coupons and indicating security measures to be taken before issuance of the coupons.

The Examiner compares the '864 coupon management system for calculating issued coupons corresponding to a program/commercial message with the present invention. In '864, an information provider (sponsor) of a program/commercial to be broadcast pays a commercial message broadcasting fee for broadcasting the program/commercial (see, paragraph 25, lines 1-6 of '864). The '864 coupon management system determines a period, number of times or fee for broadcasting the program or commercial message depending upon a number of coupons issued or used (see, paragraph 26, lines 1-6 of '864). That is, the cost of the commercial depends on issued/used coupons. A distribution history at the time of issuance of the coupon is maintained (see, paragraph 31 of '864) according to which the system calculates the number of times or period for broadcasting the program or commercial message for allocating a fee to the sponsor (see, paragraph 38, lines 26-33). This means that the '864 system is directed to tracking issued or used coupons for determining a fee to be charged to a sponsor.

The present invention includes "specifying at least one of a plurality of recording media used for coupons" (see, claims 1, 12 and 15) for outputting coupon information "to the identified recording medium" (claims 1 and 15) including "security class identifiers specifying security checks to be performed before the user receives a service to which the coupon entitles the user"

(see, claims 1, 12 and 15). Further, the present invention includes, "specifying conditions for use of coupons" when issuing a coupon to a user (see, claims 1, 12 and 15 of the present application). This enables a secure transaction method and apparatus for issuing coupons using various recording mediums by specifying use conditions for use of the coupons and specifying security checks to be performed before the coupons are issued to a user. The '864 system does not teach or suggest, a coupon issuing method and apparatus including "specifying security checks to be performed before the user receives a service" and "specifying conditions for use of coupons" when issuing a coupon to a user.

The Applicants respectfully assert that each and every element as set forth in the independent claims 1, 12 and 15 is not described in the '864 reference as required by MPEP §2131.

It is submitted that the independent claims 1, 12 and 15 are patentable over '864.

For at least the above-mentioned reasons, claims depending from independent claims 1, 12 and 15 are patentably distinguishable over '864. The dependent claims are also independently patentable. For example, as recited in claim 9, the present invention includes "inserting a transaction medium ... containing an identifier of the user that is required to perform the predetermined transaction with the user" and "determining, based on the output medium identifier associated with the selected coupon descriptor, whether the transaction medium is specified as an output medium for the coupon information" where the user is notified when the coupon information cannot be output to the inserted transaction medium upon determining that the transaction medium is not specified as an output medium for the coupon information. The '864 method does not teach or suggest "determining... whether the transaction medium is specified as an output medium for the coupon information" and notifying the user "upon determining that the transaction medium is not specified as an output medium for the coupon information".

Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103(a):

Claim 7 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over '864 in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0038239 ('239).

'239 discusses a coupon issue system for issuing a coupon to a predetermined person via the Internet based on an issue candidate list including a password.

The Examiner acknowledges that the '864 system does not teach a password controlled electronic coupon, thus relies on '239 as providing the same. The '239 system discusses issuing a coupon to a predetermined person using an issue candidate list having a password (see, paragraph 82 of '239). However, the '239 system does not teach or suggest, security class identifiers specifying security checks to be performed before the user receives a service to which the coupon entitles the user (claim 1) where the security checks include "password protection that requires the user to enter a predetermined password correctly" and outputting coupon information including "the security class identifiers and use condition identifiers" (claim 7).

Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

NEW CLAIM:

New claim 16 has been added to emphasize that the present invention's method of issuing coupons includes storing "...output medium identifiers specifying at least one type of recording medium for outputting the coupons, security class identifiers indicating a security measure to be executed when issuing the coupons and use condition identifiers for indicating corresponding use conditions of the coupons" and "displaying available coupons to the user upon receipt of a coupon issuance request from a user" so that the coupon is issued "...based on the user's selection ... indicating the at least one type of recording medium for outputting the coupon, indicating the corresponding use conditions of the coupon and identifying the security measure to be executed upon issuance of the coupon based on the information describing the coupon".

This enables an automatic transaction method for security issuing coupons based on specified security measures to be executed when issuing the coupons and indicated use conditions.

The references cited either alone or in combination do not teach or suggest the features of new claim 16.

CONCLUSION:

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with the filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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